

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 199687

KINGSTON FOR DAVIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, CGEN

SUBJECT: VISAS FOR IRAQI CHRISTIANS

REF: (A) STATE 182244 (B) ATHENS 06430

1. PROMISED REPORT FROM OFFICE OF U.S. ATTORNEY, BOSTON
ARRIVED TODAY AND CONTAINS INFORMATION SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT
FROM THAT CONVEYED OVER TELEPHONE. REPORT IS AS FOLLOWS:

"ON NOVEMBER 23, 1977, IN AN EFFORT TO LEARN WHETHER
THE VISAS IN THE PASSPORTS OF NUMEROUS IRAQI ALIENS FOR
VISITS TO THE BAHAMAS WERE VALID, THE BOSTON INS OFFICE
SPOKE TO DUGALD MCKELLER OF THE BRITISH CONSUL GENERAL'S
OFFICE IN NEW YORK. MCKELLER ASKED FOR AND WAS GIVEN THE
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NAMES OF THE ALIENS, AND THE DATES AND NUMBER OF THE VISAS.
ON NOVEMBER 28, 1977, MCKELLER REPORTED THAT THE VISAS WERE
VALIDLY ISSUED, AND HAD BEEN ISSUED AT THE REQUEST OF THE
AMERICAN CONSUL IN ATHENS. WHEN ASKED TO EXPLAIN THIS
SURPRISING STATEMENT, MCKELLER, APPARENTLY READING FROM A
CABLE HE HAD RECEIVED FROM ATHENS, REPLIED THAT THE BRITISH
HAD BECOME AWARE OF THE LARGE-SCALE ATTEMPT TO CIRCUMVENT

NORMAL UNITED STATES IMMIGRATION PROCEDURES, AND CONTACTED THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN ATHENS. THE AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL REQUESTED THAT THE VISAS BE ISSUED TO FACILITATE THE

ENTRY OF THE IRAQIS INTO THE UNITED STATES. THE AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL ALSO REQUESTED NAMES AND DATA ON THE IRAQI ALIENS SO THEIR CLAIMS COULD BE PROCESSED PRIOR TO ARRIVAL. THE AMERICAN CONSUL GENERAL ALSO ADVISED THAT IF THE BRITISH DID NOT ISSUE THE VISAS, THE MEXICAN OR VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT WOULD DO SO."

2. IT MAY BE THAT IN ADDITION TO MISUNDERSTANDING MENTIONED PARA 2 REFTEL B, RETELLING OF STORY ALL THE WAY FROM U.K. CONSULAR OFFICIALS IN ATHENS TO OFFICE U.S. ATTORNEY BOSTON THROUGH SEVERAL INTERMEDIARIES MAY HAVE RESULTED IN UNRAVELLING SOME OF ITS THREADS. WOULD LIKE, HOWEVER, TO CLEAR UP WHAT APPEARS TO BE CONTRADICTION AND WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION OR COMMENTS EMBASSY CAN PROVIDE FOR USE OF U.S. ATTORNEY.

3. IN CONNECTION WITH FOREGOING CONSUL GENERAL DAVIS WHILE IN WASHINGTON STATED THAT HE BELIEVES THAT THIS REPORT CONTAINS INACCURACIES AS TO SEVERAL ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS. HE DOES NOT RECALL PERSONALLY HAVING SUCH A CONVERSATION WITH BRITISH CONSULAR OFFICIALS, BUT BELIEVES PERSONNEL IN VISA SECTION CALLED BRITISH AFTER U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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EMBASSY ATHENS LEARNED FROM INFORMANT THAT IRAQIS HAD BEEN ISSUED BAHAMA VISAS BY BRITISH CONSULAR OFFICER. AS DAVIS RECALLS BRITISH CONFIRMED ISSUANCE OF VISAS AND FURNISHED NAMES OF APPLICANTS. DAVIS POINTED OUT THAT U.S. EMBASSY ATHENS PASSED THIS INFORMATION ON TO DEPARTMENT AS PART OF TELEGRAPHIC REPORTING OF IRAQI SCHEME TO CIRCUMVENT U.S. IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS.

4. RE PARA 1 REF B UNDERSTAND YOUR DIFFICULTY IN LOCATING FILES AND WILL REQUEST ONLY SPECIFIC CASES IF AND WHEN NEED ARISES.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE RESPONSE AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. CHRISTOPHER

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